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### Neckargemuend first stop for UM students in German program

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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March 3, 1997

### **NECKARGEMUEND FIRST STOP FOR UM STUDENTS IN GERMAN PROGRAM**

#### **MISSOULA —**

Seventeen University of Montana students with passports in their pockets and German culture on the brain left Missoula Feb. 17, bound for Germany and Austria as participants in UM's German Study Abroad Program.

The group, traveling with foreign languages Assistant Professor Elizabeth Ametsbichler, includes six Missoula-area students: Kim Chase, a sophomore in sociology; Mark Glidewell, a junior in business management; Sara Gothard, a junior in history and German; Heather Higinbothom, a sophomore in environmental biology and German; David Kraus, a senior in international business; and Rachel Tracy, a junior in German.

Their first stop was Neckargemuend, Missoula's sister city in Germany for the past four years. There they have a month of total immersion, living with host families and taking part in special courses at the University of Heidelberg, Germany's oldest university, before moving on to Vienna to finish the semester.

Although UM students have been going to Vienna every spring since 1973, the Neckargemuend/Heidelberg segment wasn't added until 1994, after the sister-city relationship was established.

"The study-abroad experience has been greatly enhanced by this addition to the program," Ametsbichler said. "UM students are welcomed with open arms by our sister city and are treated

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royally by their host families. The city relationship encourages more personal, in some instances almost familial, long-lasting bonds." And, she said, the small-town atmosphere breaks the students in before they "attack" the metropolis of Vienna.

All the students are enrolled at UM for 16 credits, which they earn in grammar, conversation, theater and culture courses. To get into the program, students must have excellent German language skills and be in at least their fourth semester of German. Three weeks of intensive orientation on the UM campus precede the trip.

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